

# Watauga Democrat.

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## WATAUGA DEMOCRAT.

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## Wages On the Free List

### T. LABORING MAN MUST FIGHT HIS OWN BATTLES.

Another Unanswerable Argument Showing that Protection Does Not Protect the Workingmen.

The bill of the Committee on Ways and Means of the present Congress, known generally as "the Mills bill," because Mr. Mills, of Texas, is chairman, as it passed the House, reduced the rate of taxation on imported goods a little less than 5 per cent. The average rate under the existing law, as has been said heretofore, is about 47 per cent. As the Mills bill goes to the Senate it is a reduction only to 42 per cent. And yet the Protectionists or high taxationists have filled the air with the clamor that this small diminution of the burdens of the people will end in ruin to the poor laborer—that is, the owners of the mills, forges and other industries which get the benefit of the existing exactions. The same cry was raised a few years ago, when a bill was pending to place quinine on the free list. Powers & Weightman and Rosengarten & Son were hanging around the corridors of the capital, button-holing members, and making piteous appeals in behalf of the laborers who were employed in the manufacture of that drug. They said nothing about themselves. They alleged by their own mouths, and through their organs in Congress, Messrs. Kelley, Randall, McKinley and others, that if the tax was removed their factories would be obliged to close and the poor laborers would be thrown out of employment. They insisted that the duty was absolutely necessary to enable them to make the goods at all, and then as now, proclaimed that the tax had an influence on the price. Their allegation was that the enormous market value of quinine was not due to the tariff at all, but to the scarcity of Chinese bark. But Congress was wise enough to disbelieve these patriotic gentlemen, and the bill was passed. For some months though, quinine still retailed at \$5.00 an ounce, resulting from a combination between the manu-

facturers, with the hope of inducing Congress to see the folly of its conduct and repeal the Act at its coming session. When Congress met in December an attaché of the New York Tribune, the monthpiece of the manufacturers, had the effrontery to approach me, in the lobby, and ask me if I did not now see that the tariff had nothing to do with establishing the value of quinine. My reply was, in the beginning, an interrogative one—"Then why do you want it?" I continued, by saying to him, that if he supposed me to be just equal, in intelligence, with the average readers of his paper, he and I differed greatly in our estimates—that I thought I understood the question quite as well as he did, and that no one but a sap-head could believe as he said he did. I suggested that he wait awhile—for the combination would be obliged to break before a great while. It did break. What is quinine worth now? Have the factories stopped? On the contrary, one of them has been enlarged.

Now, if these poor laborers can make money with quinine at fifty cents, what profit did they make when they sold in jobbers lots at three dollars? A reference to Dun's Commercial Reporter places the wealth of one of these firms at over a million, and the other at over a half million. What a sympathy I have with such poor laborers as they are. And yet these people call out to Congress, with tears dropping "as fair as the Arabian trees their medicinal gum—"Help me, Cassius, or I sing." Beggars worth a million! Out of whom did these men get their profits? Certainly not the English, French and German for none of their quinine regaled the palates of our shivering poor, when afflicted with the ague. The manufacturers made not less than two dollars out of every protected ounce which they sold, and yet had the effrontery to protest, in the name of the working men, against the repeal of a law which gave them that infamous advantage over their fellow men. They, like all other Protectionists, want fifty-five millions of people taxed for the benefit of less than five millions. Is this demand an honest one? Can any man of intelligence honestly ask it?

Did the tax on quinine increase its cost to the consumer? No man can deny it. If it was so in regard to quinine it is so in regard to all other articles, which are introduced for consumption, and have a tax upon them. When that tax is so high as to prevent fair competition by excluding, wholly or partially, all importations, the tax, instead of going into the Treasury, where it rightfully belongs, goes into the purse of the domestic producer. But a small part of it, as the statistics show, ever finds its way into the pockets of the laborers. Labor is not protected by any tariff which has ever existed. The laborers are not the men who perch "like birds of ill omen" about the capital in Washington asking that their throats and sinews shall have "a Chinese wall" of protection thrown around them—but the people who do so are the representatives of concentrated wealth, who wish such legislation as will add still

more to the gigantic piles of gold which they have wrenched from the labor of the millions by an intolerable system of taxation.

Any reflecting man ought to be able to see that if the theories of the Protectionist are carried out to their legitimate end, the government will be obliged to resort to direct taxation for the purpose of filling its coffers. Suppose the tax on all goods was such as it is on blankets—partially prohibitory—it is clear that the needed revenue could not be raised. Then the era of excises and burdens direct upon "lands, tenements and hereditaments," and all personal property, will become necessary "to pay the debts and provide for the general welfare of the United States." Is that the least to which we are invited by these pretended friends of the laboring man? Certainly such a feast is under the cover of the Protectionist tables. Their intended victims should beware how they partake of a repast whose consequences will be so detrimental to their well-being.

I have heretofore said, that neither the existing tariff, nor any other which can be established, is or can be of any benefit to even the manufacturers of cotton goods now operating in the South. The Mills bill, as it passed the House of Representatives, gives much more protection to the wool mills than they need to enable them to enter into a fair competition with the foreign producers. No one ought to have the effrontery to ask more than that, and I am unable to see how any fair-minded man can do so. The tariff gives an advantage to the manufacturers of goods which, from any cause, can be produced abroad more cheaply, whether rate of duty is high or low—for all the tariffs are protected to the extent to which they go. Of course, where goods can be made in this country more economically than abroad, no tax which can be laid will increase their price to the consumer, and thus "protect" the manufacturer. The cotton mills of the South turn out a product which is often exported and sold in England, Brazil and elsewhere "beyond the seas." He, therefore, who clamors for protection in the hope that it will swell his profits and thus put it in his power to pay his laborers higher wages, only displays a stupidity which leaves me in doubt whether he deserves any pity. An intelligent man must know that in the South no act of Congress pretending to be a revenue act, and no act of any kind, can have the slightest effect upon the price of labor. If we had absolute free trade or even a prohibitory tariff, the wages paid would be the same. Wages of labor are always on the "free list," and the owners and leaders of the Republican party have never desired it should be otherwise. They want a tax which will increase the price of goods and enable them to pay employees more, provided they see proper to do it. They never will pay a man two dollars a day for his work if they can get it for a dollar and a half. Only a knave or

a fool will say so. The Chronicle has published extracts from the circular of Mr. J. P. Foster to the manufacturers. This is an admission on the part of the President of the Republican League, that the PROTECTED manufacturers are they who get the chief benefit from our tariff laws, notwithstanding the fact that they keep in the background and push the laborer to the front when they are lobbying before Congress to get LABOR protected. The same circular contains an extract from a Republican Senator's letter, in which it is stated that he would consign these manufacturers to perdition if they did not disgorge their gains into the Radical (Rascals) campaign box, because they are "getting, practically, the sole benefit or at least the most directly important benefits of the tariff laws." The same Senator—"Oh! shame, where is thy blush?"—threatens these manufacturers with vengeance if they do not contribute to what, in this case, is a base FRAUD. He is practicing on them the same menaces which they practice before every election upon the people whom they employ to drive them into the support of a party which exists and is operated for the purpose of establishing an aristocracy of moneyed wealth.

THE GENUINE LABORING MAN must fight his own battles, for his wealth lies in his own muscles, and that department of life then is free trade. What he should want is a just system of laws, which will give him an even chance, enable him to sell his labor for the best price he can get and then be able to buy what he wants, in the cheapest market. What there would be masters want is to FORCE them to buy in a high market and sell their labor in just such a market as the lords are willing to establish. The laborer should desire only just laws, and neither he nor his employer should ask for such as do wrong to others.

The present tariff laws, so far from being of ANY BENEFIT TO THE SOUTHERN MANUFACTURERS, ARE A DOWNRIGHT CURSE by increasing the cost of their goods. A mill for spinning can be put up in England, for one third of what it costs in this country, owing mainly to the cheapness of machinery. The mill which I have in charge, and another in the neighborhood of which I am a director, have in use machinery which was made in England, imported here, and on which was a heavy duty, making it cost about fifty per cent more, than if there had been no tax upon it. Where do we get any benefit from that? The manufacturers of machinery in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts get the advantages, and they pay their employees what they please. Every man, woman and child who uses our goods, is obliged to pay, in universal peace, because of the tax on machinery, for the protection of Pittsburgh and Lowell! And every one who uses cotton goods, whether made here or elsewhere, must pay higher prices, because the goods cost higher, by reason of the exorbitant price of machinery. State Chronicle.

Walter L. Steele.

MAST N. C. August 18th, 1888. To the DEMOCRAT. The Democrats of Cove Creek Township met at Shells school house Aug. the 9th, at night for the purpose of organizing at Cleveland and Fowle Club. The meeting was called to order by T. P. Adams, on motion, Boone Deal was called to the chair. The following gentlemen were elected officers of the permanent organization: Chairman T. P. Adams, Sec. Alex. Hagaman, Treas. N. L. Mast, Com. of arrangements Enoch Swift, A. S. Adams, J. S. Mast, Alex. Hagaman and N. L. Mast. There were 25 members enrolled at the first meeting. The meeting was addressed by Messrs. T. P. Adams, E. C. Moody, D. C. Dugger and Alex. Hagaman.

The next meeting will be held at Shells school house Thursday evening Aug. 16th, at 6:30 o'clock. Mr. Jake Hodges of Texas is expected to be on hand and make a speech. Let every body come out and hear him as he is able to tell us something that will interest us all.

The Democrats of Cove Creek are very enthusiastic over the political outlook and they are going to work for Cleveland and Fowle, the loyal Standard bearers of the Democratic party. I say let the good work go on. N. L. Mast Sec.

Moretz Mills, N. C. Aug. the 10th, 1888. To the DEMOCRAT.

Allow me to say to the people through the columns of your paper that I have never given consent for my name to be used as one of the Executive Com. for the Prohibition party in Watauga Co. I received a letter and circulars from the Rev. Mr. Ingle stating that I had been appointed, and asking me to use every exertion in behalf of the new party, but I will state to the people that I am not a voter, and if I were I would be a democratic voter. I have not seen Mr. Ingle or any other prohibitionists since the construction of the new party in our country neither have I expressed myself as a prohibitionist. I hope that the good people of Watauga will look to their interests and vote for the party that has been characterized in the last four years for purity, honesty and integrity. The good old democratic party, which will, if successful in this election bring sunshine and liberty to the people of the South again.

S. Taylor. Meat Camp, N. C. Aug. 17, 1888.

Mr. Editor: It has been rumored around over this part of the county that I stand in the Republican ranks, but it is an entire mistake. I am a thorough Democrat. They can understand it. I am also a candidate before the Democratic convention of Meat Camp township for constable. Yours, Nahum Winebarger.

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June 7, 1888, 19.